

**Testimony of Mo Ivory**  
**Committee on Homeland Security Shadow Hearing**  
**“Defending Democracy: Protecting Elections from Executive Overreach”**

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Members of the Committee on Homeland Security, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you especially to Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson and the House Committee on Homeland Security Democrats for convening this important discussion.

My name is Mo Ivory. I serve as a County Commissioner in Fulton County, Georgia — the largest county in my state, and a county that has been at the center of the national fight over democracy, voting rights, and public trust in elections.

I am here today to speak plainly about what executive overreach looks like when it reaches the local level.

On January 28, 2026, federal agents executed a search warrant at the Fulton County Elections Office. They seized hundreds of boxes of election materials from the 2020 election — ballots, absentee envelopes, recap sheets, and results tapes. These were not theoretical records. These were official election materials belonging to a local government, tied to an election that had already been counted, recounted, audited, certified, and litigated.

And it is important for this Committee to understand what that moment felt like on the ground.

For local election workers and county staff, this was not an abstract constitutional debate. It was a disruption to the daily work of administering elections. It raised immediate questions about chain of custody, voter privacy, access to public records, preservation of official materials, and whether Fulton County could continue meeting its legal obligations while federal authorities had taken possession of our documents.

It also sent a message to the public servants who administer elections: even after doing your job, even after following the law, even after years of audits and reviews, you can still be pulled back into a political fight over an election that ended six years ago.

That is not normal. And it is not harmless.

The search warrant itself also reflected the danger of this kind of federal intervention. My understanding is that the original warrant contained errors serious enough that the federal government had to pause and seek a corrected warrant. That process took roughly two hours. During that time, local officials were left trying to understand the scope of federal authority, protect county records, and respond responsibly in a situation that should never have been handled casually.

To be clear, Fulton County is not asking for special treatment. We are asking for the basic respect owed to local election systems, local public servants, and the voters whose information and ballots are entrusted to us.

This did not happen in a vacuum.

Fulton County has been targeted for years because of the outcome of the 2020 presidential election. We all remember the call asking Georgia officials to “find” 11,780 votes. We remember the conspiracy theories. We remember the harassment of election workers. We remember how public servants in Fulton County were vilified for doing their jobs.

And the pressure has continued.

In 2025, the Fulton County Republican Party nominated individuals to serve on our Board of Registration and Elections whose public conduct raised serious concerns for me about their fitness to administer elections. As a Commissioner, I was asked to vote on those appointments.

I voted no.

A trial court later ordered the Commission to approve those appointments and threatened consequences, including substantial daily fines. But I believed then, and I believe now, that elected officials cannot be reduced to rubber stamps when the integrity of election administration is at stake.

The Georgia Court of Appeals has now made clear that courts cannot force elected officials to vote a particular way. That matters, because democracy depends not only on voters being free to cast their ballots, but also on elected officials being free to exercise their judgment within the law.

So when federal agents arrived at Fulton County’s elections office, I did not see it as an isolated event. I saw it as part of a broader pattern: local election systems being

pressured, second-guessed, threatened, and politicized because some people still refuse to accept the results of the 2020 election.

Congress needs to understand this clearly: when federal power is used to relitigate settled elections, local election workers pay the price first. But voters pay the price last.

They pay when confidence is undermined. They pay when election workers leave the profession. They pay when public resources are diverted from running current elections to defending old ones. They pay when conspiracy theories are given the force of government action.

No president, no administration, and no political movement should be allowed to use the power of the federal government to intimidate local election officials or cast doubt on lawful election results without a legitimate basis.

Fulton County voters deserve better. Georgia voters deserve better. And the American people deserve an election system where the rules are clear, the process is fair, and public servants can do their jobs without fear of political retaliation.

Thank you.